



Office of Mayor Jerry Sanders

FACT SHEET

June 29, 2006

MAYOR REMINDS 4th OF JULY BOATERS: RULES OF THE ROAD APPLY ON THE WATER

Heavy "Traffic" in Bays and Beaches Means Boaters and Swimmers Need to Be Extra Cautious; Alcohol Involved in 50-70 Percent of Boating Accidents

At any given time throughout the four-day 4th of July weekend, there will be an average of at least 300 water craft on the City's bays and ocean--motorboats, sailboats and ski jets being the most common. There will also be nearly a million and a half beachgoers—many of them in the water—during the four-day weekend.

National statistics show that there are thousands of recreational boating accidents per year, many involving swimmers. Contributing factors to these accidents include traveling too fast in certain water or weather conditions, failing to follow boating rules and regulations, carelessness and inexperience—and the biggest factor—driving a boat while under the influence of alcohol.

**BUI (boating under the influence) is just
as deadly as drinking and driving.
Alcohol is involved in 50-70 percent of boating accidents nationwide.**

Alcohol and Boating:

Every boater needs to understand the risks of boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs (BUI). It is illegal to operate a boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs in every state. The Coast Guard also enforces a federal law that prohibits BUI. This law pertains to ALL boats (from canoes and rowboats to the largest ships)—and includes foreign vessels that operate in U.S. waters, as well as U.S. vessels on the high seas.

- The effects of even a small amount of alcohol are exaggerated by bouncing on the water, sunshine and heat, and wind. A person usually unaffected by a small amount of alcohol can be significantly affected while boating.
- The dangers of dying in the water from hypothermia are increased by the use of alcohol, primarily because it's the alcohol that gets you into the cold water in the first place.
- Most boating fatalities are from capsizing and falls overboard. And most falls overboard are caused by alcohol use.
- Alcohol affects judgment, vision, balance and coordination. These impairments increase the likelihood of accidents afloat—for both passengers and boat operators.
- Alcohol is even more hazardous on the water than on land. The marine environment—motion, vibration, engine noise, sun, wind and spray—accelerates a drinker's impairment.
- Alcohol can also be more dangerous to boaters because boat operators are often less experienced and less confident on the water than on the highway. Recreational boaters don't have the benefit of experiencing daily boat operation. In fact, boaters average only 110 hours on the water per year.

Boating Rules, Regulations and Reminders:

On the Ocean:

- Speed is not to exceed 5 miles per hour within 1000 feet of the shoreline along the ocean front.
- Speed should not exceed 5 miles per hour within 100 feet of a swimmer or surfer.

On the Bay:

- Speed should not exceed 5 miles per hour within 200 feet (two-thirds of a football field) of a beach frequented by swimmers.
- Sunset to sunrise speed is 5 miles per hour and in marked buoy areas.
- All vessels must travel in a counter clockwise direction on Mission Bay.

General Boating Rules:

- No one under the age of 12 may operate a vessel that is more than 15 horsepower.
- Children 12 to 16 years old must have an adult who is at least 18 years old on board to operate a vessel.
- Always wear a personal flotation device when operating a vehicle and have enough extra for each of your passengers.
- Alcohol and boating can be a deadly combination. You can be cited for driving under the influence and could face criminal prosecution.